

Thanks. Thanks for coming. She's taken time out of her life to be involved with Keep America Beautiful and its affiliates, for 20 years. She's a citizen who deserves our thanks, just like many of you all do.

You know, they talk about America's strength a lot of times, and they say, "Well, America is strong because of our military." And by the way, I intend to keep the military strong to keep the peace. Or they say, "We're strong because we're prosperous." And we're getting prosperous, and we need to be even more prosperous, and I think we will be. But the real strength is in the hearts and souls of our citizens. That's where our true strength is. That's why we're a strong nation.

And it happens—and that strength is displayed here, or it's displayed when somebody says to someone, "I love you. What can I do to help you?" It's displayed when people feed the hungry. It's displayed when people provide shelter to the homeless. The great strength of America is displayed when somebody mentors a child. That's the strength of the country. And the best way that happens is when volunteers step up and say, "I care about the community in which I live, and I intend to do something about it."

And so today, at National Volunteer Week, I want to thank a member of the army of compassion and all the rest of you who are soldiers in the armies of compassion. I want to thank you for what you do to make America a better place.

And by the way, if you're interested in volunteering, I've set up what's called USA Freedom Corps. It's a clearinghouse for projects—yes, there you go. It's a clearinghouse for—a place where people can find—to match their desires with what is needed in the communities all across America. You can find it at www.usafreedomcorps.gov. See, all you got to do is get on this web page, and it will link you up to different opportunities, whether it be Scouting or whether it be environmental protection. There's all kinds of opportunities across the country just asking for your help.

So on National Volunteer Week, I call upon our fellow citizens to serve our country by helping somebody in need. And by doing so, this society will change, one heart and one soul at a time. No, the strength of this country is the fact that we're a nation full of compassionate, decent, honorable, loving citizens. And it is my honor to be the President of such a country.

May God bless you, and may God continue to bless America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:44 a.m. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. Jeb Bush of Florida; Gary Lytton, director, Rookery Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve; Colleen M. Castille, secretary, Florida Department of Environmental Protection; and Mayor Bill Barnett of Naples, FL. The National Volunteer Week proclamation of April 16 is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

Remarks at a Victory 2004 Reception in Coral Gables, Florida April 23, 2004

The President. Thank you all. Thank you.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. Thank you. *Vamos a ganar.* Thank you all for coming. For those

who don't speak Spanish, that says: We're going to win. And one reason why is because we've got such great support here in south Florida.

I'm honored you all came out today. I can't tell you how grateful I am to see the grassroots so excited. [Laughter]

I picked a pretty good man to be the chairman of the State of Florida for my campaign. I consulted with my mother. [Laughter] I said, "Who do you think would be the best man to carry the Bush banner here in Florida?" She said, "Why don't you turn to the Governor?" [Laughter] I said, "Okay." You've got a great Governor in the State of Florida. He's a good man. He really makes us proud.

We had a great day today on the west coast of Florida. I was talking about how to increase the wetlands so that our environment is stronger. I reminded Jeb that when I make a promise, I meant it. When I said, "There's not going to be any drilling offshore of Florida," I meant what I said.

I want to thank my friend Armando Codina for his leadership. He's been a long-time friend, and I thank him for convincing you all to support this candidacy and this campaign. I want to thank my friend Al Hoffman and Al Cardenas.

Today I've been spending some quality time with a Member of the United States Congress, Mario Diaz-Balart. *Adonde esta, Mario?* *Adonde esta?* Thank you, Mario. I'm glad you brought your brother, Lincoln, here today too. Thank you, Lincoln. There's Lincoln back there. And Ileana is with us today. *Adonde esta, Ileana?* *Ahi.* Stand up, Ileana. [Laughter]

These three Members of the Congress are strong and steadfast. They're great Members of the United States House of Representatives. They care deeply for our country. They care deeply for a free Cuba. They've been strong supporters, and I'm proud to call them friends.

I'm sorry that the First Lady isn't traveling with me today.

Audience members. Aw-w-w!

The President. No, I know it—I know it. She's campaigning in Tennessee. Tennessee got the better deal. [Laughter]

But I'm really proud of Laura. She is a fabulous wife, a wonderful mother, and a great First Lady for our country.

I'm looking forward to the campaign. I really am. I look forward to bringing our message to the American people. It's a positive message. It's a hopeful message. It is an optimistic message of what I believe is possible. I will campaign and present a vision to the American people as to how to win the war on terror and how to continue to spread freedom and peace throughout the world.

I will continue to campaign on a positive vision to make sure that we expand prosperity to all corners of our country so every single citizen has the chance to realize the great American Dream. I'm looking forward to the campaign. There's no doubt in my mind we will carry Florida, and we will win on November the 2d.

I put together a great administration to serve the American people, people from all walks of life, men and women who care deeply about the future of our Nation. And thankfully, I have put together a good administration, because we have been tested. We've shown the American people that we know how to lead.

Once you remember the history of the last 3 years—when we came to office, this country was headed into a recession; the stock market had begun to decline. But we acted. We passed historic tax relief. We let people keep more of their own money, and as a result, the economy is strong, and it is growing stronger.

When we came into office, we had to confront corporate citizens who did not tell the truth to their shareholders and their employees. It was a problem for our Nation. But we acted. We passed tough laws. And now it is abundantly clear that we will not tolerate dishonesty in the boardrooms of America.

When we came to office, when Dick Cheney and I came to office—Dick Cheney is the greatest Vice President our country has ever had. Mother heard me say that

one time and she said, "Wait a minute, buster." [Laughter] But when we came to office, our military was growing dispirited. It wasn't receiving the resources it needed. So we strengthened our defense budget, and today, no one can question the skill and the strength and the spirit of the United States military.

And we were attacked on that September day in 2001. The enemy hit us. They hit us because of what we love. See, we love freedom. They hate freedom. The enemy came to our shore. They declared war on the United States of America that day, and war is what they got. We've been on the offensive against this enemy. We're chasing them down one at a time to bring them to justice. We will use every resource at our disposal to protect America. And once again, this Nation is proud to lead the armies of liberation. Fifty million people are now free, thanks to the United States of America and our coalition.

I have made it clear where I stand. I have spoken clearly to the American people and to the world. And when I say something, I mean it. And that's important for a leader. It's also important for a leader to understand the responsibilities of leadership. My job is to confront problems, not to pass them on to future Presidents and future generations.

I'm looking forward to the campaign. I'm looking forward to it. I'm running against a fellow who has been in Congress a long, long time, so long that he's taken just about both positions possible on every issue. [Laughter] He was for the PATRIOT Act. He was for the No Child Left Behind Act. He was for NAFTA. He was for the use of force in Iraq. Now he's against the PATRIOT Act. He's against NAFTA. He's against the No Child Left Behind Act. He was against my decision in Iraq. He's been on both sides of just about every issue. If there was a third side possible, he'd take it. [Laughter]

Not only have we confronted problems; we have delivered. We've delivered results

for the American people. This economy of ours is growing stronger every day—every single day. Think about what we've overcome. We've overcome attacks. We've overcome war. We've overcome scandal. We've overcome recession. Yet I can tell you, the economy is strengthening. GDP growth is strong. Manufacturing activity is up. Home-ownership is at the highest rate ever in American history. More minorities own a home today than ever before, and that is positive news for America.

Our economy is adding new jobs now. Remember, we had 308,000 job increase in March; 750,000 jobs since last August. People are finding work. Things are getting better. We acted, and as a result, this economy is improving. That's good news. That's real good news.

But there's more to do. One of the things that's important for a person running for office is to constantly talk about what we intend to do. See, I've got a vision to make sure our prosperity is lasting prosperity. We've got to make sure we're a nation that doesn't wall us off from the rest of the world. We must reject economic isolationism. We must open up markets for U.S. products. Listen, if you're good at something, you want to be selling things in the world. For the sake of job creation and lasting priority and prosperity, I will work to open up markets for U.S. goods so people can find work right here at home.

In order to make sure we have lasting prosperity, we've got to have a legal system that is fair. There's too many junk and frivolous lawsuits that penalize small-business owners here in America. We need tort reform. In order to make sure that we have lasting prosperity, we've got to do something about health care, the cost of health care. What I will not do is allow the Federal Government to run the health care system of America.

I'm for—I strongly support health savings accounts to empower consumers in America. I'm for association health care plans to allow small businesses to pool risk, so

they can better afford insurance for their employees. And we need medical liability reform at the Federal Government.

We need an energy plan. We need more energy in this country, and we can do so without drilling off the coast of Florida. We're too dependent on foreign sources of energy. We need to encourage conservation. We need new technologies to make us less dependent. But one thing is for certain, we need to use the resources that are at our disposal so that we're not dependent on foreign sources of energy. For us to have lasting prosperity, the Congress needs to get me an energy bill to my desk this year.

In order to make sure we have lasting prosperity, we better make sure our folks are educated. There's all kinds of new jobs being created, and sometimes the skill sets of our workers don't match those jobs. Good education, by the way, starts in the early grades.

I passed the No Child Left Behind Act. It's a strong piece of legislation. It says that every child can learn; every child has the potential to learn. We're going to stop this business about just shuffling our children through the schools. You see, what happens is, if you just give up on kids, like oftentimes happens, you wake up at the end and people can't read and write and add. You can't be a country with lasting prosperity unless every child learns to read and write and add and subtract. In return for Federal money, we're now insisting that States measure. See, we want to know. We want to know if a child can read and write, and if they can't, they're going to get extra help early. The No Child Left Behind Act is an important part of making sure this country is literate and strong.

And as our economy grows and changes, we better make sure that our workers are reeducated. I put out what we call the Jobs for the 21st Century plan, which utilizes community colleges more actively. It says to the community colleges, "Here's some Federal help so you can train people for

jobs which actually exist." Technology is changing our world. We'd better make sure our workers have the skills to fill the jobs of the 21st century. If we want to have lasting prosperity, we've got to have an education system that works, an education system that enables our workers to fill the jobs that are being created here in our country.

In order to make sure we have lasting prosperity, we need certainty in the Tax Code. Listen, we did good work on the tax relief package. We increased the child credit. If you've got a family, we made it easier for you to raise the family. We reduced the marriage penalty. What kind of Tax Code is it that penalizes marriage? [Laughter] We're not interested in penalizing marriage in America. We're interested in encouraging marriage in America.

If you paid taxes, you ought to get relief. Instead of trying to pick or choose winners, if you pay taxes, you get relief. The tax relief we passed helped our small businesses all across America. It was an incredibly important part of the vitality of our economy, because most new jobs are created by small businesses and entrepreneurs. No, the tax relief we passed came at the right time. It's working, and in order to make sure we have lasting prosperity, we need to make the tax relief permanent.

And finally, in order to make sure we have lasting prosperity, the Federal Government has got to be wise about how we spend your money. See, it's your money, not the Government's money. We've got to be wise about how we spend it. We need fiscal discipline in Washington, DC. We need to be willing to set priorities and meet those priorities.

The problem in the campaign, of course, is that the tendency is to overpromise. My opponent has done a good job of that. He's already promised over a trillion dollars of new spending. See, the temptation is to get in front of audiences and promise here and promise there. I've submitted a budget which cuts the deficit in half over 5 years.

He's begun to make those promises. There's no audience that he's not willing to make a promise in front of.

But we're adding up the money. There's over a trillion dollars, and he says he's going to pay for it by taxing the rich. The problem is, there's not enough money in taxing the rich to pay for the promises. You know what it means he's going to do? He's going to tax everybody in America. The good news is, we're not going to let him, because I'm going to win in November.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. There are big differences in foreign policy, during the foreign policy debates. I've got a clear vision as to how to protect America and to spread freedom and peace throughout the world. We're still at war—we're still at war. It's important for the President to understand the stakes. I understand the enemy. They're ruthless. They're coldblooded. They're trying to frighten us. They're trying to shake our will. This country must be determined, must be strong, and never relent to the killers.

I will use all the tools at my disposal to protect America. We'll work with other nations to protect America. We'll share intelligence. We'll use our great military. We'll do everything we can. My most solemn duty is to protect America from the enemy. That's why I created the Department of Homeland Security, to better share information, make sure our borders are better protected. The best way to protect America is to stay on the offensive, is to find them. There is no cave or hole deep enough to hide from justice of America.

We're making progress against Al Qaida. Two-thirds of the known leaders have been captured or killed, and we'll get the rest of them with time. It's a matter of time. It's a matter of will and strength and determination and time. I'm telling you, we've got a fabulous military. For those of you who have got a loved one in the United States military—for those of you with a

loved one in the military, you tell them the Commander in Chief is incredibly proud of their service to our Nation.

Right after September the 11th, I told the world that "if you harbor a terrorist, you're just as guilty as the terrorist." When the President says something, he better mean it. I meant it, and the Taliban found out what we meant. This was this barbaric crowd that was running in Afghanistan. They were providing safe haven for Al Qaida. They were providing training camps for Al Qaida. They not only did that, but they were incredibly repressive. Young girls were not able to go to school in Afghanistan, but thanks to the United States and our coalition, not only is America more secure, not only is the world more secure, but young girls now go to school, many of them for the first time in their life.

Another lesson of September the 11th is that when we see a threat overseas, we must take it seriously. When we see a gathering threat, we can no longer hope oceans protect us from harm's way. I looked at the intelligence and saw a threat in Iraq. The United States Congress looked at the same intelligence, and they saw a threat in Iraq. The United Nations Security Council looked at the intelligence, and it saw a threat in Iraq.

I took the threat seriously as your President. I knew the world had changed after September the 11th. I took the threat seriously because I remembered the facts—not only the intelligence said something, but Saddam Hussein used weapons of mass destruction on his own people. Saddam Hussein invaded countries in his neighborhood. Saddam Hussein paid suiciders to kill Israelis. Saddam Hussein had ties to terrorist organizations. I took the threat seriously and went to the United Nations Security Council.

I said to the United Nations Security Council, "For nearly a decade, you have said to Saddam Hussein to disarm, and now is the time for your words to mean something. But if you won't disarm him, we

will lead a coalition to do so.” The United Nations Security Council, if you remember, acted. On a 15-to-nothing vote, they sent this clear message to Saddam Hussein, “Disarm, or face serious consequences.” Saddam Hussein, once again, decided to deceive the world. So I was presented with a choice: Either trust the word of a madman or defend America. Given that choice, I will defend America every time.

My opponent voted for the use of force in Iraq. He just didn’t support my decision to get rid of Saddam Hussein. Perhaps he was hoping that Saddam would lose the next election. [*Laughter*]

We acted. We acted, and there are no longer mass graves and torture rooms and rape rooms in Iraq. We acted. Because we acted, Libya got the message and have now voluntarily decided to disarm. Because we acted, freedom is rising in the heart of the Middle East. Because we acted, the world is more peaceful and America is more secure.

There is a debate going on about when the President must take action to defend America. Listen, we’ll build coalitions, and we have. There’s over 30 nations in Iraq helping us now. We’ve got nations in Afghanistan helping us. We’re working closely with our friends and allies who understand the stakes.

But let me make this very clear to you: I will never allow leaders of other nations to determine the national security issues of America. We have tough work in Iraq. It’s been tough weeks for America. It’s been tough weeks for those who have got loved ones in the Iraq theater. And there’s a reason why, because we’re making progress toward freedom, and the enemies of freedom want to stop us. They want to shake our will. They’ll kill anybody in their way in order to try to get us to leave.

But the stakes are too high for us to leave. This is an historic moment. You see, a free society will be a peaceful society. A free society in the heart of the Middle East will begin to change the world for

the better. No, they’re trying to shake our will, but America will never be run out of Iraq by a bunch of thugs and killers.

We will keep our word to the Iraqi people. There are thousands in Iraq who long for freedom. See, freedom is not America’s gift to the world; freedom is the Almighty’s gift to each man and woman in this world. That’s what we believe. That’s what we hold dear here in America. That’s something we will never forfeit. And therefore, the United States and our brave troops and allies will continue on the offensive, continue implementing our strategy, and we will win this essential battle in the war against the terrorists.

We believe in freedom not only in Iraq, but we believe in freedom in our own neighborhood. My foreign policy—I’ve got two words for my policy—two words for my foreign policy for Cuba: *Cuba Libre!*

Audience members. Viva Bush! Viva Bush! Viva Bush!

The President. We will keep the pressure on the tyrant. We want the people of Cuba to hear this message loud and clear: We will make no concessions to tyranny; we believe strongly in freedom; we will insist upon their human rights, their God-given rights; we stand strongly with the freedom fighters and the island of Cuba.

As well we believe in a democratic and free Haiti. Our quest for freedom is around the world. Good foreign policy is a foreign policy that insists upon freedom in our own neighborhood. Good foreign policy is a policy that insists upon freedom in parts of the world where there’s hatred and the lack of hope. That’s why I will continue to work, so long as I’m President, for a vision of peace based upon the cornerstone of free societies, and we will succeed.

And finally, I will continue to work for a culture which says that each of us is responsible for the decisions we make in life. See, I want to help to change the culture from one that has said, “If it feels good, just go ahead and do it,” and, “If you’ve got a problem, blame somebody

else,” to a culture in which each of us understands we’re responsible for what we do.

See, if you’re a mother or a father, you’re responsible for loving your child with all your heart. That’s your responsibility. It is your most solemn and important responsibility to love your children. If you’re worried about the quality of the education in the community in which you live, you’re responsible for doing something about it. Just don’t hope that Washington, DC, solves problems. Get involved with your schools here in Miami, Florida, and insist upon quality of education for each child. Support your teachers. If you’re in corporate America, if you’re a CEO, you’re responsible for telling the truth to your shareholders and your employees.

And finally, in a responsibility era, each of us is responsible for loving our neighbor just like we’d like to be loved ourselves. Listen, the strength of this country is the citizens of this country, the hearts and souls of the people. That’s the true strength of America. We’re a compassionate nation. We’re a decent nation. We’re a nation of many people bound by freedom and a nation of many people who care deeply about their neighbor.

The President’s Radio Address *April 24, 2004*

Good morning. This week I celebrated Earth Day by traveling to Maine and Florida to visit some of this Nation’s vital wetlands. From the Gulf of Maine to the Gulf of Mexico, Americans are blessed to live amid many incredible wonders of nature.

We no longer take those wonders for granted. We understand our responsibilities to the natural world to conserve and make better what we have been given. Wetlands are among our most important natural resources. They provide a habitat for wildlife,

I met Donna Huck today when I got to the airport. She’s a volunteer. She’s a soul who said, “What can I do to make my community a better place?” So she works at the Children’s Hospital here. She cares about children. She’s lending her love to help heal the broken heart of the sick. I call to you here in Miami, as I do around America, and say, “If you want to serve your Nation, feed the hungry, mentor children, provide shelter for the homeless, reach out to the lonely, and together, we can change America one heart, one conscience, one soul at a time.” No, the strength of this country is the great people of America, and it is my high honor to be the President of such a fantastic country.

Thanks for coming. May God bless. Thank you all very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:31 p.m. at the Hyatt Regency Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. Jeb Bush of Florida; Al Hoffman, finance chairman, Republican National Committee; Al Cardenas, former chair, Republican Party of Florida; Representatives Lincoln Diaz-Balart and Ileana Ros-Lehtinen of Florida; former President Saddam Hussein of Iraq; and President Fidel Castro of Cuba.

trap pollution, reduce the impact of floods, and provide recreational opportunities.

For many years, our Nation has sought to slow the loss of our wetlands. We’ve made tremendous progress. And on Earth Day, I was proud to announce a new goal: Instead of just limiting our losses, we will expand the wetlands of America.

To accomplish this objective, my administration will work to restore, improve, and protect at least 3 million acres of wetlands over the next 5 years. This new wetlands